

STUDY GUIDE TO

Scottsboro: An American Tragedy

The case that sparked the civil rights movement
PBS Home Video

MSK

Before we start the video, fill out this chart about what you already know the case. What do you want to learn?

What do I already know about Scottsboro?	What do I want to know?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there were 9 boys involved - they were all African American - it was a racist time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the details! - Jim Crow Era? -

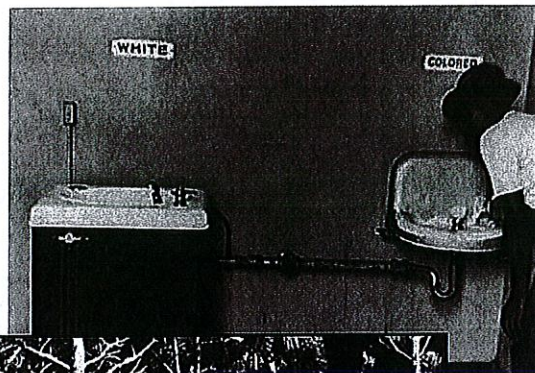
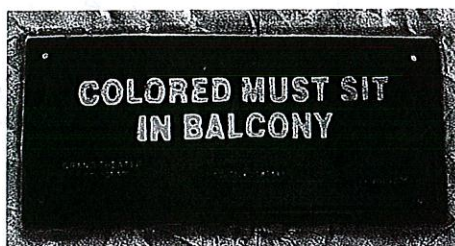
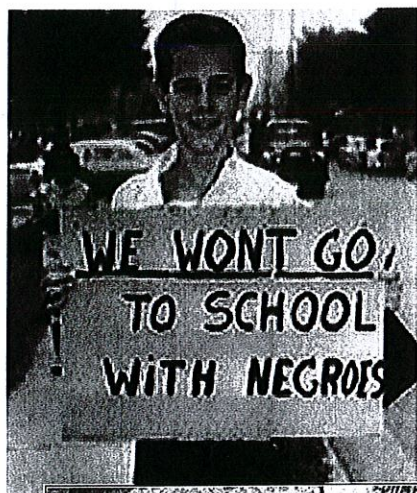
What do I know about the Jim Crow south? What was it like?
<p>There was a great deal of racism, but it was not quite considered that, because the law supported it.</p>

On the back of this page are some difficult images of the Jim Crow south. This is what life was like for African Americans in the 1930s (and until the end of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s), when the Scottsboro trial took place. It is important to understand this to understand the trial.

"Jim Crow was not a person, yet affected the lives of millions of people. Named after a popular 19th-century minstrel song that stereotyped African Americans, "Jim Crow" came to personify the system of government-sanctioned racial oppression and segregation in the United States."

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/>

Look at these pictures. Use them to explain what life was like for African Americans in the Jim Crow south of the 1930s.



What can you see in these pictures?	What was life like in the Jim Crow south?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Separation - lynching - "colored" "negro" not Black or African American 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - dangerous for African Americans - they were not slaves, but still treated so unfairly - "Justice" did not exist for blacks.

Now, fill in the information as you watch the film.

How many boys were involved in the case? 9

How many women? 2

What actually happened on March 25, 1931 in Tennessee? Why was there a fight between the white and black men on the train? (A "hobo" is basically a homeless person who rides a train without paying.)

9 negro boys 2 doz hobos black + white
March 25, 31

Occurred in Alabama

group of whites moving along top, stepped on land (18 yr old) Raymond Patterson looking for work. Whites told them get off, they said no fight. In Paint Rock, gang of negroes beat up white 2 white women, pale + disheveled Victoria Price, Ruby Bates. One white woman said

What did people in the town of Paint Rock, Alabama think happened on the train?

The white men were beaten and thrown off train by black crew.

What did they do to the 9 boys on the train?

9 prisoners Clarence Norris
surrounded by a mob of shot guns, ropes, pieces of iron
Prisoners loaded into a truck, taken to Sandshoro.
Sheriff protected

Write down information about the two women on the train...

What did they look like?	What did they say happened?
<p>two white women dressed like boys tombos, pale, didn't look like women Eugene Williams B white Montgomery blind Clarence Norris Sybilis Ponell young above</p>	<p>they said they got raped by 9 white boys. boy B Andy Wright 19 yr boy Raymond Patterson - long time rider</p>

What was Alabama like in the 1930s (during the Great Depression)?

A world coming apart. Unemployment. Conflict between classes and races. Hobos very common.

Girls on rails

Ruby 17 Vic 21, Huntsville (40 miles). worked together at textile mills. Vic ^{Price} denied time for adultery. Hard - dominant Bates - quiet, soft spoken. -> submissive.

Describe Ruby Bates and Victoria Price...

How were they different than "traditional, innocent, Southern women"?

Basically prostitutes. Traded sex for food and clothes. Lives a violation of segregation.

Mon, Apr 6 1931

What is the connection between southern, white women and black men?
(Hint: think about how women were seen in the south)

It was thought that black men had an insatiable appetite for white women.

What is lynching?

Hanging and killing someone by a mob

Why were African American men lynched?

When the trials began, what did Victoria Price say happened?

btome 3toher had legs, knife to her, one raised blade intracore. Ruby corroborated. Could not identify anyone. a acc couldn't get a lawyer. real estate attorney.

TRIAL 1

When the boys were first put on trial, several important things happened:

1. Ruby Bates corroborated (supported) her friend's story in every detail, even though she couldn't identify any of her "attackers."
2. The 9 accused rapists were unable to get a lawyer in Scottsboro, so they hired a real estate attorney from Chattanooga (a nearby town). *(Think: Is a real estate attorney who works with buying and selling houses someone the type of lawyer you would want to defend you in a trial like this? Is this a fair representation of "right to an attorney"?)*
3. The defendants met with their lawyer one time for 20 minutes. He told them to plead/say they were guilty!
4. The boys were the only witnesses called to the stand to testify in their defense.
5. **Clarence Norris**, one of the boys, says this in the recording about what the courtroom was like: "There wasn't a black person around no where. Everybody was white but just us 9."
6. The verdict was guilty.
7. The trials lasted 3 days.

What was the sentence for 8 of the 9 boys?

Guilty. Sentenced to the electric chair
Kilby Prison near Montgomery
1st night, ripped. Guards beat them w/ fists, kicked them,
threatened to take them to the gallows.
Bumal prison.

Why did the **communist party** come to help the boys?

1931 - communist small but dynamic. Great Dep - rx of worker's paradise, fall of capitalism.
Used this issue as a way to further their own cause and make the public aware of all the things that were wrong with the system. NAACP

Who else came to defend the boys? NAACP

NAACP means National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The communist party eventually spread the word of the case all over the world. They helped the boys get a new lawyer and appeal in front of the Supreme Court of the USA.

The Supreme Court decided that the boys deserved a new trial because the boy's legal defense had been so "inadequate" that it violated their rights of due process of the law.

"Inadequate" means not good enough.

"Due process" is where the right to a fair trial comes from.

For the first time ever, the Supreme Court decided that even poor people should have the right to "effective assistance" from lawyers and if they didn't get good, fair lawyers, they deserved another trial.

So, the boys get a new trial!

Who was Samuel L. Leibowitz? Why is he important?

Best known criminal lawyer from NY, hired by Communist Party
Kidnappers, rapists, corrupt cops
77/78 cases won
Hung jury

Where was the second trial in April, 1933?

Decatur, Alabama

Haywood Patterson 1st
most menacing-looking
of the 9 boys.

James E. Horton - Judge

True or false?

All of the members of the jury in the second trial were white. True

TRIAL 2

Important Facts of the Second Trial:

1. Ruby Bates went missing
2. Victoria Price tells the story again that she was raped. 16m testimony
3. Mr. Leibowitz used a toy train to show that where Victoria Price was and how the boys were in a different part of the train.
4. Even though Victoria Price was inconsistent and said "I can't remember," it was hard for Mr. Leibowitz to cross-examine her.
5. Victoria Price made up the name of the place where she said she had stayed the night before the train ride.
6. Leicester Carter said that he, Ruby, and Victoria's boyfriend had intercourse the night before the train ride.

Mr. Leibowitz explains why he thinks Victoria Price made up the story. What did he say?

The Boarding House she said she stayed; the lady who owned the house Mrs. Calie Brachy, was made up. She didn't want to get arrested

Even though Mr. Leibowitz did a good job, people in the south hated how he treated Victoria Price, thought he was offensive, and hated Mr. Leibowitz.

Some people in the courtroom said about Mr. Leibowitz, "That Jew lawyer ought to go back to New York." Why did they say this?

The people from the South did not approve because
① Mr. L was Jewish and ② he was trying to get the Scottsboro Boys off

The doctor who examined Victoria and Ruby said these important things...

1. There were no signs of struggle on Victoria and Ruby.
2. The girls were not upset when he examined them.
3. The semen found in the girls was not active and alive. This would be impossible that if 9 men had raped them a couple hours before.

Who was the surprise witness that Mr. Leibowitz found?

Lester Carter
been w/ 2 girls night before

What did she say?

Ruby said that Victoria told her to make up the story because otherwise...

They would be arrested for being hobos on the train; traveling without paying.

Unfortunately, because the communist party helped Ruby, the jury did not listen to her testimony.

What was the verdict of the second trial? The boys were found guilty.

What was the sentence? Death, by electricity ☺ (by electric chair)

The jury hated Mr. Leibowitz because he was Jewish, a communist, and from the north. He could have never won them over and gotten a verdict of not guilty.

Mr. Leibowitz asked for another, new trial. The Judge Horton agreed, despite the pressure from other people to keep the guilty verdict, because he didn't think the evidence was good enough! There was too much "reasonable doubt."

The problems with the Scottsboro Case united blacks and whites in protest in the north. This restarted the movement for African American equality.

TRIAL 3

Important Facts about the 3rd Trial...

1. Judge Horton was replaced by Judge Callahan, who was more biased.
2. The judge made it especially difficult for Mr. Leibowitz to make a good defense.
3. The jury AGAIN convicted the boys, finding them to be guilty and sentencing them to death.
4. Mr. Leibowitz then appealed to the Alabama Supreme Court.

Why was the fact that the boys had an all-white jury important?

It spoke to the racism and the fact that they may not have had an impartial or fair jury.

The Supreme Court ruled that Alabama had excluded blacks from the jury on purpose, so they overturned the guilty verdict...AGAIN.

Because of this, people in Alabama and the south were getting tired of the court case. They wanted to settle instead and had many doubts.

THE 4TH TRIAL

Important Facts About the 4th Trial:

1. Mr. Leibowitz had to step down as the defense attorney and was replaced with a southern lawyer.
2. The 4th trial convicted 5 of the boys, but dropped the charges against the other 4 boys, after 6 years in jail.

The parole board, who decides if a prisoner can leave prison early, met three times and did not reduce the sentences for the boys. They eventually grew into men, and the American public forgot about them.

Time is what finally brought an end to the Scottsboro Boys' case. In November 1943, the parole board let three of the boys out on parole after 12 years in jail. In 1946, it let another boy out. Haywood Patterson was the only boy still not let out.

He finally ran away and broke out of the prison farm in July 1948.

In 1976, the Governor of Alabama George Wallace, officially pardoned (said he didn't do the crime) Clarence Norris.

REFLECTION

What are your reactions to the story of the Scottsboro Boys?

What upsets you the most?

What was the most surprising part?

How did bias influence what happened in the case?

Write out the answers to some or all of the questions here:

